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Burke Asks Extra in Budget for Six More Polaris Subs

Advances Made With 1200-Mile Missile Cited

By John G. Norris
Staff Reporter

Adm. Arleigh A. Burke, chief of naval operations, testified yesterday that he will ask for a billion-dollar boost in the new defense budget to build six more Polaris submarines.

Under rigorous Senate cross-examination, Burke opposed a Strategic Air Command proposal to start an around-the-clock bomber air alert and asserted his belief that the Nation will retain adequate deterrent power, despite Soviet missile gains, for the next three years.

Meanwhile, Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) threatened to make public some data on secret intelligence estimates of future Russian missile strength if Administration witnesses continue to insist the threat has lessened.

He declared at a Senate hearing that data presented by the Central Intelligence Agency forecast that the U.S.S.R. will have a larger number of long-range missiles, compared to last year's estimate, instead of fewer, as Pentagon chiefs have testified. Unless they retract, Symington asserted, he will release the percentage of increase.

The Missouriian's statement brought a clash with Sen. Prescott Bush (R-Conn.), who complained the United States

seems to be giving away all its military secrets in the debate over the "missile gap." Symington retorted that "in a democracy, the people have a right to know the truth." Bush snapped back that too much "politics" has gotten into the issue.

Burke told a joint meeting of the Senate Space and Preparedness Committees that the 1200-mile Polaris missile has passed all its "tough" tests and consequently he is now recommending a major step-up in the program. He said he believes Defense Sec-

retary Thomas S. Gates, Jr. "looks favorably" on his proposal.

Plugging the mobile, "hidden" Polaris submarine as the best answer to the growing U.S.S.R. missile threat, Burke said he wanted to triple the current Administration program of building three of the missile subs a year.

He also said he may recommend putting the Polaris on Navy cruisers deployed to the Mediterranean and Far East, declaring the first such ships could be ready by 1963. Burke was not asked when the six additional Polaris subs would be ready, but it is hardly likely they could be operational much before January, 1963.

A supplemental appropriations request for \$975 million to build six more subs with all supporting forces "is the bill," Burke said. This would bring the 1961 Polaris building program to nine vessels—equal to the total such missile craft built or building. The Navy has said that 45 such subs would provide an "indestructible" deterrent force.

Thus, Burke's testimony indicated a sharp divergence from that of Gen. Thomas S. Power, chief of the Strategic

forces, who expressed fear that Russian missiles might knock out the Nation's retaliatory bases during the next three years, and has urged more money to start a full-scale SAC air alert as soon as possible.

Some congressional Democrats have backed his demand, and yesterday Rep. Clarence Cannon (D-Mo.), chairman of the powerful House Appropriations Committee, threw his support to such a move.

In a House speech, Cannon urged Congress to disregard the Administration's "spiral

of claims that "we are still the most powerful nation on earth." Normally a tight-fisted advocate of lower defense budgets, Cannon said Russia has surpassed the United States in military power and Congress must vote more money for an air alert and other arms.

"Every city in the United States is subject to direct attack and our enemy has the weapons to launch such an attack now," Cannon said.

He blamed the Nation's predicament on "the admirals" and Congress' acceptance of their "outmoded" concept that the Navy is the first line of defense. He "long has been a foe of the Navy and its aircraft carriers."

Burke, when questioned about Power's statement that Russia could knock out all of the Nation's 100 retaliatory launching points with 150 ICBMs and 150 IRBMs, said he disagreed. He said Russia "doesn't have 150 ICBMs and if they did have them, they couldn't destroy our total retaliatory force."

The Navy chief said it is now "nearly impossible" for American missilemen to fire an ICBM at a fixed time much less get them all off simultaneously. Power's real point, he asserted, was that

missile launchers should be mobile.

To launch a full air alert now would be a "waste of money," Burke said, adding that all that is needed is to attain the capability of such an alert during a crisis.

Burke repeatedly asserted that he supported President Eisenhower's defense budget, and "accepted" Administration cuts in ship modernization funds and money needed for new torpedoes and mines. But when pressed under cross-examination, he gave what he considered to be the Navy's needs.

Declaring that the United States now has the most powerful deterrent force in the world, he said he believed the nation will continue strong and "be able to wreak considerable damage on Russia this year, next year and the year after... very destructive damage."

Burke said that any nation that Russia, with the advances it suidicé." But he added that Russia, with the advantage of its growing missile power, may be expected to wage propaganda, political or even limited war. He expressed belief that Russia and Red China may "have an agreement under which Russia acts very nice now while China goes on a rampage."

House committee testimony shows Army and Defense Department in sharp disagreement over adequacy of emergency airlift.